



COMPLETE 2021 SEASON PREVIEW

# HAWK TALK PODCAST

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# HAWK TALK PODCAST

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## COMPLETE 2021 SEASON PREVIEW

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## BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR.

That's my advice for the wider footy community, from fans to experts. So successful was the mighty HFC in the 2010s, that people suffered from Hawthorn fatigue. When was it going to be another team's turn at the top? When would everyone get to wake from the brown and gold nightmare?

Well, be careful what you wish for: here we are, trapped in a cruel and endless cycle of Richmond dynasty talk, with no other side competent enough to stop them. Opposition supporters were so quick to celebrate Hawthorn's inevitable slide down the ladder, that they failed to see that our proud club was serving as the padlock on Pandora's Box, preventing true misery from consuming the world... and by true misery, I mean Richmond fans being absolutely insufferable about their team at barbecues.

So how did it come to this? Well, the landscape has changed a lot for Hawthorn over the past few years. Plenty of our IP has ended up elsewhere, with coaches successfully courted by rival clubs. Of course the pandemic decimated staff numbers, the club forced to show good, hard-working people the door. In terms of on-field personal, we've had some premiership heroes hang up the boots and some defect for one last shot at glory.

When people mention the end of the club's golden era, they make it sound as though it was instantaneous. But it didn't just end.

It was dismantled over a few years, like a mechanic slowly stripping a car. The pandemic-ravaged season, a year characterised by change, might have finally forced Hawthorn into a hard reset - just as all of the media experts have been clamouring for. "Hit the draft!" Be careful what you wish for.



Boasting their best draft hand in years, Hawthorn was always going to be a club to watch intently at the 2020 National Draft. Besides using pick six to consolidate their defensive stocks, selecting the highly-touted Denver Grainger-Barras, the club appeared to have a focus in mind, bringing in Seamus Mitchell, NGA talent Connor Downie, Tyler Brockman, and Jack Saunders. Combined with recent addition of Lachie Bramble via the Pre-Season Supplemental Selection Period, there's plenty to suggest a new directive is in play: get exciting, get nimble, get moving.

Speaking of the need for speed, Jarman Impey looks set to return to his post at half-back, with Changkuoth Jiath set to add his own dash and intercept marking prowess to the mix. Sam Frost completes the trio capable of lightning-quick rebound 50s, while the group of Hardwick, Greaves, Day, and Scrimshaw will be tasked with distributing the footy with precision. Any defence minus Sicily is worse off, though it appears role-for-role, Hawthorn's defensive line holds plenty of promise.

Meanwhile, the club has set Craig McRae the formidable challenge of re-tooling the forward line to generate some much-needed firepower. It's time to establish with certainty whether Mitch Lewis can get back to his form of 2019, and if the reinvention of big-bodied Jacob Koschitzke as a forward target is the eureka moment the club's been crying out for. Then there's Hanrahan, who leads the way for our mosquito fleet of dangerous forwards. After solid first impressions, it could be his breakout season.

As for the midfield... ok, you know what? You've probably cottoned on to what I'm doing here, and yeah, you're right - I'm selling hope. As far as I can see, there's promise on every line. No, I don't think it will be a quick rebound to flag-favouritism, but I do think it's clear that the build has already begun. And this 'bottoming out' that opposition fans have been begging to see? That the footy media has long prescribed? It could well be the genesis of something special - the greatest era Hawthorn's history.

Okay, maybe not. But it could be fun to tease fans of rival clubs about the possibility of an incredible revival. Be careful what you wish for! Enjoy the guide. Enjoy footy being back. Go Hawks!

- Nick





# #1 HARRY MORRISON

**DOB** 12-11-1998 **Height** 180 cm **Weight** 79 kg **Debut** 2017  
**Games** 2020: 11, Career: 42  
**Goals** 2020: 0, Career: 5

- ⊕ Versatility, link-up player
- 
- 
- Minimum impact

## NICK SAYS...

I want to say I'm wild about Harry, but I'm more worried for him than anything else. Like a lot of Hawthorn fans, I've been clinging tight to those exciting first impressions, as well as his servicable 2018 season. The question is, can Morrison recapture that kind of form? And where would he line up in our best 22? I suppose the second question is the one that's stumped me lately. My natural inclination is to pencil Harry in at half-back, but there's hot competition for that part of the ground. It's one thing to be a fringe player at Hawthorn, but a fringe player at half-back? I'd say Morrison's deep in the queue. Of course, there might be a spot for him on the wing, though he's got the new hotness in Connor Downie to contend with now. And beyond that, I'm not sure where you play him. One thing's for certain, though - given an opportunity, Morrison has to seize it. The talent's there, and he's a proven performer who can find the footy, but he has to exert more influence on the result. Another season of invisibility, and the club might make a tough call.

# #2 MITCH LEWIS

**DOB** 14-10-1998 **Height** 198 cm **Weight** 92 kg **Debut** 2018  
**Games** 2020: 8, Career: 22  
**Goals** 2020: 5, Career: 25

- ⊕ Genuine marking forward
- 
- 
- Inexperience, shoulder rehab

## TIZZ SAYS...

He'll be 23 and out of contract in November, so will Clarko have flicked the #SwitchToMitch by then? I reckon he will have - and there's plenty of key forward youths coming up that'll be pushing to take his spot, or at least giving him a chop out on the way. The club believes in their 2016 pick 76 draftee, and with Roughy always available for advice - after he bestowed his #2 to Mitch out at Waverley - it's hard to imagine he can't build on his 2019 form. Certainly we, the fans, have seen enough to understand Lewis has the talent, but there's questions over his durability and his ability to carry the workload that comes with being the focal point of a struggling attack. Forget his 2020 - he was out of form, injured, then dropped, before finally returning to the side in the final weeks to show something for the retiree celebrations. His body and mind should mature before our eyes this year, and with the new stewardship of McRae as forward line coach, should be aiming for 30 goals in 2021 and impacting contests from the wing to the goal square. An important year for Mitch.



# #3 TOM MITCHELL

**DOB** 31-5-1993 **Height** 182 cm **Weight** 84 kg **Debut** 2013  
**Games** 2020: 17, Career: 128  
**Goals** 2020: 2, Career: 63

⊕ Accumulator, extractor  
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## NICK SAYS...

All I want is an uninterrupted pre-season for the Barbecue-Shape-eating, opposition-beating, 2018 Brownlow Medallist Tom Mitchell. Is that too much to ask? It's looking like he'll miss the opening of the season, as he recovers from an off-season shoulder reconstruction. As weird as it sounds, his absence isn't of particularly great concern to me. The fact is, Hawthorn being forced to innovate and try something a little different in the interim isn't such a bad thing. There was a certain stubbornness that plagued the midfield throughout 2020, with the same guys trying the same things week after week. Naturally, opponents pieced things together fairly quickly, and relished whisking the ball from the centre with ease. Anyway, Mitchell's immense ability as a masterful accumulator and extractor is such a luxury - when the time's right, he'll simply slot back in. He's plug n' play with this line-up, like a USB stick. And if you're concerned about him finding his best footy, remember this: if not for Gunston's hot form as our go-to forward option, in 2020, he'd have another Peter Crimmins Medal to his name by now. What a player.

# #4 JARMAN IMPEY

**DOB** 9-7-1995 **Height** 178 cm **Weight** 82 kg **Debut** 2014  
**Games** 2020: 5, Career: 121  
**Goals** 2020: 2, Career: 53

⊕ Speed, rebound 50s  
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## TIZZ SAYS...

He's long been a fan-favourite, and these days Jarman Impey is as much a face of this footy club as he can possibly be, short of being in the leadership group. It seems he's stepped up the positive vibes, and could be integral to morale. As for Impey's on-field endeavours, he's practically a new recruit for 2021 after an injury-ravaged 18 months. Impey can play on the half-back flank, as a winger - a position we'll be thin in this year - or even as a half-forward goalsneak. Skilled, and with a remarkable ability to dictate the play, Impey is key to our successes this year. If Clarko can get him with the ball in space, then our forwards will have a much better chance of kicking a winning score. He's unlucky to have missed out on a Peter Crimmins Medal, he's certainly earned the confidence of the fans with his unerring commitment to the Hawthorn way. It's going to be great watching the duo of Wingard and Impey toying with opposition teams again, and if they can hit form together, the grey clouds over Waverley will evaporate. After all, it's why these great friends joined the Hawks in the first place; to find success.



# #5 JAMES WORPEL

**DOB** 24-1-1999 **Height** 185 cm **Weight** 85 kg **Debut** 2018  
**Games** 2020: 15, Career: 48  
**Goals** 2020: 2, Career: 16

⊕ Contested game, tackling  
⊖ Lack of pace

## NICK SAYS...

It's extremely satisfying to take stock of Worpel's progress since his debut in 2018. In no time at all, he's become an essential component of this new-look Hawthorn, and with a Peter Crimmins Medal to his name no less. In terms of this next chapter, and what I want to see from Worpel in 2021, it's as simple as this: more of the same. His role is solidified, and it serves us well. Fully conditioned now to the rigours of senior footy, with almost 50 games and complete seasons under his belt, Worpel's not only a proven talent, but in a great position to bring his contested game and trademark toughness to another level. The development and improvement to come is something to get very excited about. There's every indication the club knows what it has with Worpel too. He's one of a few Hawks signed through to 2023, a cornerstone of Hawthorn's future. Add to that his promotion to the leadership group, and Worpel has been positioned as the club's own 22-year-old paragon for new recruits - a symbol, a high standard to aspire to.

# #6 JAMES SICILY

**DOB** 9-7-1995 **Height** 186 cm **Weight** 87 kg **Debut** 2015  
**Games** 2020: 11, Career: 93  
**Goals** 2020: 2, Career: 58

⊕ Intercept king  
⊖ ACL rehab

## TIZZ SAYS...

The talking points here are pretty obvious. Right throughout 2021, we'll continue to lament such an unfortunate injury to James Sicily, stemming from something so innocuous. While his absence will be felt enormously, it's interesting to note that the club haven't placed him on the long-term injury list. So what are Hawthorn up to here? Are they thinking he may eventually play an on-field role in 2021, in good time? While I would welcome his incredibly watchable defensive work, if it were up to me, I'd be more inclined to keep Sicily in cotton wool for 2022. By the time that campaign rolls around, he'll be stepping into a battle-hardened backline that has learned to stand on its own without his mercurial talents. Until then, it's a combination of rehab and Call of Duty for James. With any luck, his stint on the sidelines will be productive for his teammates, with Sicily serving as a kind of mentor for the club's young defenders. We already know Denver Grainger-Barras is a self-professed fan of Sicily's, and would only be too happy to take on whatever lessons our #6 can impart.



# #7 BEN MCEVOY

**DOB** 11-7-1989 **Height** 200 cm **Weight** 102 kg **Debut** 2008

**Games** 2020: 16, Career: 222

**Goals** 2020: 4, Career: 88

⊕ #1 ruckman

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## NICK SAYS...

I'm not going to tell you I predicted McEvoy's appointment as captain - there's literally hours of podcast audio to confirm I never had him in calculations. Still, this is a choice that I can get behind. There's a lot that goes into leadership, and I think Big Boy ticks a lot of boxes. He's clearly got the maturity, the temperament, the consistent on-field endeavour, and commands respect. Historically, all of these things have long been hallmarks of the club captaincy, regardless of the era and win-loss record. So, I back Big Boy for the role. There remains a major question mark around his deployment on-field, though. Was Clarkson right to experiment with using McEvoy in defence? He has about a billion runs on the board, so to speak, so yes. Also, it did work pretty well on occasion. My problem with it is this: too often in 2020, the experiment was plan A, when it should only ever be plan B. And this is to Big Boy's immense credit: he is our #1 ruck, and has been for a long time. If he was denying a younger Hawk a spot and some experience, it'd be different. As it is, the position is contested between him and 30-year-old Ceglar. Just play him where he's best!

# #8 SAM FROST

**DOB** 28-8-1993 **Height** 194 cm **Weight** 93 kg **Debut** 2012

**Games** 2020: 16, Career: 107

**Goals** 2020: 0, Career: 8

⊕ Plays on smalls and talls

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## TIZZ SAYS...

Clarko immediately embraced the style of Frosty, and we can see it's beginning to pay dividends. His dash and run - noted hallmarks of his game - are starting to catch the eye, and his competitive will is unerring. I have to confess, I did not embrace "Frostball" for some time; I was preoccupied with flashbacks to Croad and Hay running out of defence and kicking long, with hope, only for the ball to reach their opponents before their teammates. Anyway, that was the cynicism I was grappling with before - now I'm starting to see opportunities when Frost has the ball, and the sort of energy he brings to the team. No one can criticise his level of effort, and now some polish is starting to show as he improves his skills and those around him gain confidence in him. This year I'm embracing Frosty as a leader in defence, because I feel we're going to need fighters like him, blokes that'll never give up a contest. Is he one of our most crucial defenders as we plot a path back to contendership? There's an argument to be made. That's the thing about Frostball.



# #9 SHAUN BURGOYNE

**DOB** 21-10-1982 **Height** 186 cm **Weight** 89 kg **Debut** 2002  
**Games** 2020: 16, Career: 389  
**Goals** 2020: 13, Career: 11

⊕ He's Shaun Burgoyne

⊖ He's pretty old

## NICK SAYS...

What can I say about Silk hasn't already been said? The jab at his age is totally in jest. We all know Shaun Burgoyne can still go in 2021 - his twentieth season as an AFL player, and his twelfth consecutive campaign as a Hawk. He's already the VFL/AFL all-time Indigenous games record holder, and will be hoping to notch up another huge milestone this year, his 400th game within reach. Personally, I'm hoping we get to celebrate it live. While I'm a staunch advocate for playing the kids, and the club's steady build towards future flag contendership, there has to be 11 games for Shaun Burgoyne. There just has to be. For one, you can't play all the new recruits at once, and for the guys that do get the call up to the senior side, it would be of enormous benefit to them to have Burgoyne's guidance on gameday, both on and off the field. As for where to play him, Silk has long been a bit of a Mr.Fix-It type of course, able to slot in wherever needed. I personally see him helping out the forwards, arguably our most underdeveloped line. Against the Lions in Round One, we saw what an asset he can still be in that part of the ground. Here's hoping for an encore.

# #10 JAEGER O'MEARA

**DOB** 23-2-1994 **Height** 183 cm **Weight** 82 kg **Debut** 2013  
**Games** 2020: 12, Career: 104  
**Goals** 2020: 4, Career: 56

⊕ Classy, consistent ball-winner

⊖ Knee worries, needs support

## TIZZ SAYS...

"Captain Jaeger". Try saying it aloud. Even now, it goes down well, doesn't it? It felt like it was time. After all, Jaeger has become our most consistent midfielder, stepping up and producing some much-needed team performances, while Tom Mitchell continues on his own way back to dominance. To coin a Clarko-ism, the really pleasing thing about O'Meara is that he serves as a remarkable role-model to lead our developing midfield group. I have to wonder, could it be that Hawthorn supporters are about to see the best of Jaeger O'Meara? I'm getting excited about the inside rotation of Jaeger, Tom Mitchell, Tom Phillips, James Worpel, and Liam Shiels. Remember, Clarko is on record that he wants a fleet of mids that will share the contests. I suggest we look out for his favourite combinations when the jaws of victory are closing. In any case, it's going to be interesting to see how the midfield develops in what is marked as a season for rebuilding, and Jaeger is undoubtedly a major player in all of that.



# #11 CONOR NASH

**DOB** 28-7-1998 **Height** 197 cm **Weight** 93 kg **Debut** 2018

**Games** 2020: 2, Career: 21

**Goals** 2020: 0, Career: 11

⊕ Athleticism

⊖ Impact, best position TBD

## NICK SAYS...

Physically, Conor Nash looks a likely sort. His elite athleticism forms a large part of his appeal. Plus, to this point, there's been plenty of little glimpses, indications of a quality player I suppose at this point, I'm scratching my head trying to think of where Nash excels, as far as the fundamentals of the game are concerned. Dubbed 'Tall Poppy' on the podcast, we've long celebrated his ability to apply defensive pressure inside forward 50. Indeed, his tackling numbers have been reasonably good across his career. But if I had to guess, seeing as he only managed two appearances in season 2020, the club is probably after much more than body-on-body from the big Irishman - and so am I. I'd love for Nash to have much more of an attacking presence, to assert himself and become damaging with ball in hand. He's got the traits to do so, but it seems to be a side of his game that's under-developed. Personally I think he could be a weapon on a wing - play to his strengths, have him surprise opponents and run them ragged. I don't see a dependable forward target in Nash, so get him up the ground and give him a paddock.

# #12 WILL DAY

**DOB** 5-6-2001 **Height** 187 cm **Weight** 70 kg **Debut** 2020

**Games** 2020: 11, Career: 11

**Goals** 2020: 1, Career: 1

⊕ Classy, intercept marking

⊖ Second year blues?

## TIZZ SAYS...

Cast your mind back to the shepherd from Isaac Smith, and Will Day's sensational finish - it was the moment the youngster announced himself to the competition, signalling that an elite talent had arrived. Crucially, it was also a moment that paved the way for the rest of the boys on this list, with the young brigade trusted with more game time as the season wore on. In a year when most of the recent recruits suffered from arrested development, without a competition to ply their trade and develop, Will demanded his selection.

Day is exciting with the footy, he's highly-skilled and with so much potential that you can be forgiven for just keeping eyes on him as the ball becomes a vague distraction. In that sense, there's some Hodgey about him. Remember how you could just follow Hodge into the pack and the ball would come out with him on the other side? He's not quite there yet, but maybe he could be one day. I'm very excited - perhaps too excited - and now with the number 12 of his Premiership-winning grandfather Rob Day on his back, the story arc is becoming really absorbing. May it prompt Clarko to demand a Father-Son academy!



# #13 OLLIE HANRAHAN

**DOB** 28-7-1998 **Height** 181 cm **Weight** 75 kg **Debut** 2019  
**Games** 2020: 7, Career: 16  
**Goals** 2020: 3, Career: 10

Goalsneak

Consistency

## NICK SAYS...

So here's the thing about replacing not one, but two of the most electrifying and irrepressible small forwards to ever play for Hawthorn: turns out it's a little tricky. Rioli and Puopolo were just the perfect duo in a perfect era, and finding equally-as-capable replacements was always going to be tough, if not totally fanciful. With both gone, though, time is up, and we're about to learn just how Hawthorn has fared with this formidable project. Certainly, with a modest 16 games to his name, Hanrahan has emerged as the obvious go-to goalsneak. For obvious reasons, I'm cautious of reading too much into practice matches, but Ollie gave us plenty to get excited about with his three-goal half. a miraculous snap off the outside of his boot the chief highlight. It reaffirmed everything we've learned about Hanrahan to this point: on his day, he can be dangerous. He's got the cleverness, the sorts of tricks to put together a decent highlight reel. The only thing I'm hoping for is consistency. Sure, he begins 2021 as the go-to guy, but this season is all about holding onto that title, confirming beyond doubt that he's the future. The way to do that? Turn up, get the job done.

# #14 JACK SCRIMSHAW

**DOB** 4-9-1998 **Height** 193 cm **Weight** 88 kg **Debut** 2017  
**Games** 2020: 13, Career: 27  
**Goals** 2020: 0, Career: 0

Birchall clone

Only 27 games, still green

## TIZZ SAYS...

2020 was the year we needed to see from Jack. He struggled early, when the team was performing well, but returned to the senior side later in the year, and absolutely flew home to take out the Most-Improved Player gong. This campaign, he's coming off an injury-affected pre-season, but will likely regain his place in the back six if he gets his body right. After all, this is a back six that suddenly has to find their way without both Stratton and Sicily, two walk-up starts. He'll be especially crucial if Clarko decides to deploy Impey further up the ground. With only 27 games, our very own Birchall clone is shaping as one of the most important players in the line-up each week, capable of turning defence into attack. Expect teams to stifle his influence and keep him occupied. recognising his impact. It's a big development year for Scrimshaw, one that could see him breakout as both an on-field leader and a favourite amongst the fans. He has an opportunity to become a mainstay of the team, and manage many more appearances than his 13 for 2020.



# #15 BLAKE HARDWICK

**DOB** 5-2-1997 **Height** 181 cm **Weight** 79 kg **Debut** 2016  
**Games** 2020: 16, Career: 82  
**Goals** 2020: 1, Career: 6

Disposal efficiency

2020 a backwards step

## NICK SAYS...

2020 could have looked a hell of a lot worse for Hardwick. Having injured his pectoral muscle, it was predicted he'd spend almost half the season on the sidelines. The good news: he ultimately only missed one game, returning in Round Two, due to the suspension of the season. On top of that, Hardwick registered an average of 8.6 pressure acts, and once again staked his claim as one of the club's best ball users, posting 81.4% disposal efficiency. The bad news, though, and my personal take: he seemed out of sorts for the majority of the season. He found less of the footy overall, and his general impact seemed somewhat diminished. There's a number of players I'd bank on bouncing back in 2021, and Hardwick is definitely among them. His role is very well-defined within this side, with very few teammates threatening to produce the same standard of footy in the same position. Of course with Hardwick, it's about more than what he produces with ball in hand - he's adept at putting the clamps on small forwards, which is an urgent need at the moment.

# #16 TOM PHILLIPS

**DOB** 7-5-1996 **Height** 187 cm **Weight** 79 kg **Debut** 2016  
**Games** 2020: 15, Career: 89  
**Goals** 2020: 5, Career: 44

Talented wingman

Great expectations

## TIZZ SAYS...

Tom Phillips arrives at the Hawks ready to cement his career at the highest level. Played out of his desired position; wing, during his final years at Collingwood, Tom arrives 11 games shy of the magical 100-game milestone, averaging 22 touches a game. During pre-season, he has been asked to fetch his own ball on the inside of the packs, head to the outside for spread, and also position himself as the distributor across half-forward. He's been played all over the park - something we noted in the club's practice and pre-season hit-outs - which is incredibly demanding, but he's taken to each assignment pretty well so far. His kicking needs to improve, but his awareness at the contest and ability to overlap run and spread the defensive lines of the opposition will be an excellent weapon. It's true that the Hawks had these qualities in Isaac, but Isaac was more of a ball-carrier than Tom, who appears better at making position, receiving and then quickly taking the best option. Pleasingly, Tom Phillips reminds me a bit of my childhood favourite Condon too.



# #17 DAN HOWE

**DOB** 4-12-1995 **Height** 191 cm **Weight** 86 kg **Debut** 2015  
**Games** 2020: 5, Career: 67  
**Goals** 2020: 2, Career: 13

- ⊕ Big-bodied nullifier
- ⊖ Recurring foot issues

## NICK SAYS...

In the second half of Hawthorn's 2019 campaign, Dan Howe played just about every game, contributing well as the team vied to sneak into the eight. I mention this, because it offers an indication that Howe factors into Hawthorn's vision for the future. How frustrating, then, that Howe would find himself seemingly trapped in perpetual foot injury rehab for the next several several months. That must have been very difficult, and I'm happy that Howe was able to break back into the senior team in July, stringing five games together. I have to wonder though - and pun fully intended here - has he lost a step? As a big-bodied stopper, tasked with shutting down lively opposition players, he's never been lightning quick - that wasn't really ever the point of his role. Is he a tad slower than he was before? Should our fears be allayed by the fact he was deployed on the wing in our practice match hit-out with the Dogs? That was a surprise move, given Howe has spent the majority of his time at half-back, occasionally plugged into the midfield. Curiouser and curiouser. Something else of note: he's out of contract at the end of 2021. A crucial year for Howe.

# #18 JONATHON CEGLAR

**DOB** 14-2-1991 **Height** 204 cm **Weight** 102 kg **Debut** 2013  
**Games** 2020: 13, Career: 89  
**Goals** 2020: 1, Career: 41

- ⊕ Can drift forward
- ⊖ Frequently beaten in 2020

## TIZZ SAYS...

Ceglar was battling a chronic foot injury for much of last year, and yet was still saddled with number one ruck duties, while McEvoy watched on from defence. That was frustrating. I know Ceglar is a tap ruckman, and that's what Hawthorn is looking for - a ruckman that can get the ball straight to JOM, Tom, Worps, also Tommy P - but he was often so hampered in his leap and movement across the ground that it began to dampen confidence in the 30-year-old. Ceglar struggled in a team that struggled overall, and many supporters were left to wonder why he was re-contracted for three years in 2019. If Ceglar can live up to his ability, he'll be hitting the scoreboard, taking lead-up marks on the wing and palming it to Worps, who breaks away from the contest. If all that comes together, I think Hawthorn might be well-placed to shock a lot of teams. Still, I'm not sure there's the depth - in his particular position anyway - to allow him to rest and recover, and that means he can be worked-over by opposition sides.



# #19 JACK GUNSTON

**DOB** 16-10-1991 **Height** 193 cm **Weight** 87 kg **Debut** 2010



#1 forward

**Games** 2020: 16, Career: 208



Back injury

**Goals** 2020: 31, Career: 398

## NICK SAYS...

No wonder Jack Gunston required back surgery in the off-season - he spent the best part of 2020 carrying the forward line. Week after week, Gunners stepped up as the go-to target, eventually earning his first Peter Crimmin's Medal. It was a well-deserved honour and a credit to him for bringing his A-game in a home and away season like no other. As far as his next campaign is concerned, I have no qualms with Gunston taking as much time as he needs to get his body right before slotting back into the senior side. There's no sense rushing his return - this is a Hawthorn side that desperately needs to find other avenues to goal, and map the future of the forward line. Frankly, if Gunston somehow manages to poll as strongly in this year's PCM, and remains the focal point of the forward line, something's gone very wrong. So, having said all that, my expectations of Gunston this year are pretty relaxed. It's a combination of the injury rehab, and many, many credits in the bank. His output matters far less to me than the other guys set to occupy the forward 50 arc.

# #20 CHAD WINGARD

**DOB** 29-7-1993 **Height** 183 cm **Weight** 85 kg **Debut** 2012



X-factor, midfield impact

**Games** 2020: 17, Career: 178



Inconsistency

## TIZZ SAYS...

Someone cue Katy Perry; no one on this list can firework quite like Chad fireworks. We've witnessed some exquisite form from Wingard to date, but consistency has been the issue. Fortunately, his work-rate is excellent, meaning he's poised to put together his most impactful season for Hawthorn yet. Typically, Clarko shifts him into the midfield if he can't find the ball, then he gives him a breather in the forward line, where Chad often sneaks himself a goal or sets one up for the side. He's a sleeping giant - we haven't seen the best of Chad yet. Frankly, the club's dysfunctional forward setup simply didn't allow it. We all know that Chad at his very best can dismantle opposition sides, making defenders appear hopeless, and delighting even the most embittered anti-Hawk commentators. It's going to be fun to see which opposition players don't pay Chad enough respect this season - I predict they're in for pantsing. I expect Chad to be given a license to thrill if the midfield looks threatening. With an injury-affected pre-season, step one is getting his body right again.



# #21 LACHLAN BRAMBLE

**DOB** 19-04-98 **Height** 182 cm **Weight** 71 kg **Debut** TBD



Class, outside run

**Games** 2020: N/A, Career: N/A



Consistency

**Goals** 2020: N/A, Career: N/A

## NICK SAYS...

Competing with Dandenong Stingray Will Bravo and Tasmanian forward Jackson Callow for a spot on Hawthorn's list, Lachlan Bramble ultimately prevailed, signing just days before the supplemental selection period deadline. It's fair to say he's done well for himself - it feels like only yesterday he had signed with Box Hill! I have to speculate on the extent of Andy Collins' influence here, with Bramble having played a bit at Williamstown. I suppose they started with that inside word, and Bramble only inspired more confidence in his abilities as the weeks went on. Recently, Rob McCartney spoke of his versatility, skilfulness on both sides of the body, as well as his speed and power. We definitely saw a bit of that in the pre-season hit out with North Melbourne. The thing that stood out to me was Bramble's endeavour overall - he played like a guy that had full appreciation of Hawthorn's backing, like he wanted to repay the faith. Bigger picture, I think signing Bramble makes sense, and perfectly suits seems to be Hawthorn's recruiting focus at the moment. That focus in a word: speed. It was evident in our draft selections, and evident here.

# #22 LUKE BREUST

**DOB** 11-11-1990 **Height** 184 cm **Weight** 84 kg **Debut** 2011



Clever, classy, consistent

**Games** 2020: 13, Career: 220



Needs support from forwards

## TIZZ SAYS...

The sage of our forward line. Wise and also cunning, his footballing IQ is off the charts. The energy of some new faces in the forward line - namely big bodies bringing the ball to ground for Punky and co. - could spell havoc for opposition defences. Hawthorn score almost 50% of the time when Luke is involved in the lead up play - an incredible stat. After a couple of leaner seasons by his normally-impressive standards, he's shown off his determination to change the course of results with a couple of inspiring efforts in the practice matches. I'll be watching for the changes to his already excellent style that McRae and Clarko have worked out for him. It may mean more midfield time, to help with rotations and also puzzle opponents who suddenly find themselves on the ball and without the protection of their defensive structures. Whatever the plan is - and we probably won't see the most aggressive parts of it for some time- Breust will be a telling component, one that'll be directing the youngsters on where they ought to be out there on game day.



## #23 TIM O'BRIEN

**DOB** 28-3-1994 **Height** 193 cm **Weight** 90 kg **Debut** 2014

**Games** 2020: 16, Career: 78

**Goals** 2020: 12, Career: 61



Can take on ruck duties



"Almost", "Glimpses"

### NICK SAYS...

Tim O'Brien was drafted in 2012. He's been a mainstay of the team since the 2016 season, averaging 14 games a year. To date, O'Brien has only once managed to kick more than 12 goals in a season. These are just the facts - make of them what you will. For me, personally, it means that I'm reluctant to expect anything more than what I've seen to date: glimpses. He'll chip in as a handy support ruckman, bob up for a couple of goals occasionally, a few nice marks will stick, but that's about it. His pre-season suggests he could tear it up, and I'd be delighted if 2021 turned out to be "Almost" O'Brien's long-awaited breakout year, but surely I'm forgiven for not buying into the hype too readily. Also, here's something to note: O'Brien is out of contract at the end of the year, and a restricted free agent. I wouldn't expect he'd leave seeking greater opportunity, with selection in Hawthorn's senior side all but guaranteed for the foreseeable future. Perhaps a more lucrative paypacket would tempt him, but which club picks up the phone? And is there an offer for O'Brien that Hawthorn can't or won't be willing to match? Honestly, I think for better or worse, we're all in on TOB.

## #24 JAMES COUSINS

**DOB** 19-3-1998 **Height** 185 cm **Weight** 84 kg **Debut** 2017

**Games** 2020: 6, Career: 25

**Goals** 2020: 1, Career: 10



Took his opportunity in 2020



Still in the midfield queue

### TIZZ SAYS...

My favourite number has gone to the most puzzling Hawk on the list, and I hope it grants him the opportunity he's toiled for since he joined Hawthorn as a rookie with pick 46 (incidentally, his old number) in 2017. AFL has been a waiting game for Cousins. Even in a year where Hawthorn went from looking good to lacking in competitive spirit, Cousins had to wait until Round 13 for selection. He went some ways to repaying the faith finally showed in his abilities, helping the Hawks give ladder-leaders Port Adelaide a real scare that day. His pressure acts are what keep him at the end of the queue I think, but his clever ability to keep the ball in attack, and often hit the scoreboard himself catches the eye. To that end, I hope we see him used by McRae in a forward role, when he's not in the heart of the midfield. In any case, this is a crucial year for Cousins. He's out of contract at the end of the season, and will need to make the most of his opportunities to establish himself as part of Hawthorn's future.



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## #26 LIAM SHIELS

**DOB** 29-4-1991 **Height** 183 cm **Weight** 84 kg **Debut** 2009  Tackling, dependability  
**Games** 2020: 16, Career: 221  
**Goals** 2020: 6, Career: 81  Lack of pace

### TIZZ SAYS...

The old-unsung-hero of the great Hawks treble side is now reaching the twilight of his career, so expect his position to come under threat... just not in 2021, however! Liam Shiels' pre-season form is something to behold. Has Silk had a word to him? It certainly seems he's taking cues from his teammate in #9. Honestly, for a seasoned campaigner such as Shiels, there's no huge urgency for him to be out there in the practice or pre-season clashes, but there he is anyway, giving his best. You love to see it. Our veteran tackling-machine has long set the bar for intensity at the contest, and has begun to show off his kicking skills by nailing some wonderful goals in the last few seasons. The ever-reliable Shiels is a linchpin for Clarko. Every coach needs a bloke that can just get the job done. And really, Pup gets it done almost every time. I expect this coming season will adhere to regularly scheduled program, so to speak, as Shiels once again stakes his claim as perhaps the most underrated Hawk of his time.



# #27 MICHAEL HARTLEY

**DOB** 7-6-1993 **Height** 198 cm **Weight** 104 kg **Debut** 2016  
**Games** 2020: 2, Career: 46  
**Goals** 2020: 0, Career: 1

⊕ Big-bodied defender

⊖ Purely a depth player?

## NICK SAYS...

When Michael Hartley made his debut for the club in Round 13 last year against Port Adelaide, my reaction was pretty similar to most Hawthorn fans: where the hell has this guy been?! Producing an admirable first game in our defence, Hartley had people scratching their heads as to why he hadn't been selected sooner. His stats the following week against Essendon would be near-identical, in what was another solid performance. Surprisingly, he was then omitted, with the likes of Frawley and Stratton favoured for the clash against would-be wooden spooners Adelaide. Well, we all know how that worked out. Once Hartley slipped out of the senior side, he never really seemed in calculations again. What exactly happened is a mystery to me. Obviously in the inner sanctum, there's all kinds of KPIs and things the coaches want to see from their players - stuff that as spectators we neglect to scrutinise. Maybe that's at play here. I have to wonder if Hartley is perceived as purely a depth player. That's certainly the impression. I think he's definitely handy to have as an option, especially as we recalibrate our defensive line and get the balance right again.

# #28 KYLE HARTIGAN

**DOB** 7-11-1991 **Height** 194 cm **Weight** 98 kg **Debut** 2013  
**Games** 2020: 12, Career: 113  
**Goals** 2020: 0, Career: 1

⊕ Experienced key defender

⊖ Clangers

## TIZZ SAYS...

OK, let's go through some first impressions: the bloke is stacked. 194cm and 98 kg. Hartigan is carrying some serious momentum into those packs. He's notched up 113 games over 8 seasons at Adelaide, and that kind of experience means Kyle is in the window to become a rock in the Hawks defence. He is 30 but he's ready-made to compete with the bigger bodies. Although his defensive one-on-one numbers need improvement, he's never soundly beaten, and always finds a way to impact his opponent (or at least make it a contest). Hartigan is a stopper, much like Frawley, who he replaces in the side. He offers little in ball movement or setting up the play - that's not really his bag, and our backline has options aplenty for that sort of thing. I expect Hawthorn to create easy options for him to use on the way out of defence, and also the use of a third man up to impact the wrestling one-on-ones Hartigan enjoys. Based on glimpses of Hartigan's pre-season form, he looks dependable, making Hawthorn's call to recruit him a good one.



# #29 CHANGKUOTH JIATH

**DOB** 13-6-1999 **Height** 185 cm **Weight** 74 kg **Debut** 2019  
**Games** 2020: 5, Career: 7  
**Goals** 2020: 0, Career: 0

⊕ Speed, intensity

⊖ Decision making

## NICK SAYS...

I've really enjoyed Changkuoth Jiath's Hawthorn journey so far. In four years, it feels like he's made considerable progress, his confidence building all the time. At this point, it looks as though he's in the queue for a spot at half-back, and as much as I'd love to see CJ unleashed on a wing, I see the merits of a defensive post. Jiath is well-placed to initiate zippy, slingshot surges forward, in the mold of Adam Saad, or even our own Sam Frost. We've already seen it in practice, and I think CJ has the potential to be a real weapon in that part of the ground. Of course, with just seven senior appearances to his name, there's still kinks to iron out. Besides all the exciting glimpses, we've definitely seen some deficiencies in CJ's game too - the occasional wrong option taken, some shoddy disposal, and a smidge of overzealousness in some moments. It's nothing I'm too concerned about. It's early days, after all. I'm more buoyed by the stuff he does right. He's the reigning time trial champ, with explosive speed off the mark to match. Not only that, he's got a solid aerial game, and desperation you love to see as a fan. I'm looking forward to seeing what he brings in 2021.

# #30 DAMON GREAVES

**DOB** 25-4-2000 **Height** 186 cm **Weight** 77 kg **Debut** 2020  
**Games** 2020: 3, Career: 3  
**Goals** 2020: 0, Career: 0

⊕ Hunger, work ethic

⊖ Still green

## TIZZ SAYS...

One of the shining lights in the late stages of the 2020 season, Damon Graves burst onto the scene - a feat that's rare for defenders, I know. Perhaps it shouldn't have come as much of a surprise when we look at his form in the VFL, where he was running at 74% kicking efficiency. He was nevertheless overlooked by selectors until Round 16, I have big expectations for Damon - mainly built on the 90% disposal efficiency he went onto post in his three senior games. He did seem a little too eager in a couple of contests early in the pre-season, and got caught out of position, but it's hard to force the issue as a defender. Ultimately, I'm banking on his cool head winning out, and he'll be a dependable last line defender for the next decade. Expect him to be competing for Hardwick's spot as the season progresses. As a tough, hungry defender whose polish has been well-documented, he'll definitely be in frame. He made the most of his opportunities last year, and so I think we can comfortably expect the same kind of drive in 2021.



# #31 KEEGAN BROOKSBY

**DOB** 27-4-1990 **Height** 197 cm **Weight** 99 kg **Debut** 2015

**Games** 2020: 1, Career: 15

**Goals** 2020: 0, Career: 3



Capable at senior level



Age profile, purely for depth?

## NICK SAYS...

We've barely had a look at Keegan Brooksby in brown and gold, thanks to a pandemic-affected home and away season, so it's hard to get a gauge on him at this point. Unfortunately, it'll be a minute before we see him in action again. This is legit - literally a minute into this write-up, I received word that he had sustained an ankle injury, the kind that would have him sidelined for several weeks. So, the guy who I figured might be handy insurance in the instance of Cegs and Big Boy becoming unavailable - or at least support for Reeves - is suddenly missing a chunk of the season. He's also 30, and currently on a one-year contract, at a club making efforts to rebuild. I don't mean to be a buzzkill, but it doesn't look good on paper, does it? Quite unlike Brooksby himself, whose CV suggests he could make an impact at senior level. Once Gold Coast NEAFL Player of the Year (2016), as well as West Coast WAFL best and fairest (2019), Brooksby has the credentials. I also like what I've seen of him as a forward target, too. Perhaps if he can make an impact there, he'll earn another year yet. But a rebuilding list with three rucks over 30 would be a curious move indeed.

# #32 FINN MAGINNESS

**DOB** 23-2-2001 **Height** 187 cm **Weight** 80 kg **Debut** 2020

**Games** 2020: 1, Career: 1

**Goals** 2020: 0, Career: 0



Big-bodied midfield bull



Disposal

## TIZZ SAYS...

We Hawkers at home spent much of the year crying out for Finn Maginness' debut, and eventually he received one of the hardest debut games you could ask for, lining up on Marcus Bontempelli. I thought it was much too tough an assignment, given the lack of any real pressurised training throughout 2020, but Maginness still managed seven contested possessions and looked like he enjoyed the contest, going head-to-head with such a formidable midfield. Of course, Finn is trying to live up to very large expectations. He's the son of a gun defender - back-to-back premiership hero Scott - and fans instantly had him marked as a future star. That's always difficult, but hopefully with a season under Sam Mitchell at Box Hill, he'll continue to develop nicely. We're going to see him learn what his greatest strengths are and how to use those to his advantage. He seems to be trying to be everything at the moment. The question is, just what is the best way to combine his elite running power (see: his 2km time trial) and his contested game? I'm keen to see what Sammy has in store for him.



# #33 HARRY PEPPER

**DOB** 9-8-2001 **Height** 180 cm **Weight** 83 kg **Debut** TBD

**Games** 2020: 0, Career: 0

**Goals** 2020: 0, Career: 0

Zippy defender

Injury-interrupted pre-season

## NICK SAYS...

Given his expertise as a small-to-mid-sized defender, I expect NGA recruit Harry Pepper will be competing with Hardwick and Greaves for senior selection. While that's certainly stiff competition, Pepper has a variety of traits befitting of a quality half-back flanker, boasting speed, endurance and great competitiveness. Sounds to me like another #33 we had on our list once upon a time! No pressure, of course. Like many of the younger guys on the list, he'll be looking to smooth out some of the flaws in his game, with his decision making needing some work. Right now, he appears to be third in line for his specific role, but that may be attributed to an injury-interrupted pre-season as much as anything else. Pepper hurt his knee during training back in January, limping off after falling awkwardly under a tackle. He was placed on restricted duties for roughly a month, before resuming full-contact training in March. Now he's fit and healthy again, I suspect Harry will need a productive 2021. He's part of a group of fringe players that the club could easily go either way on, and with reserves comp resuming, this is his shot at securing his spot.

# #34 JACOB KOSCHITZKE

**DOB** 11-7-2000 **Height** 196 cm **Weight** 94 kg **Debut** TBD

**Games** 2020: 0, Career: 0

**Goals** 2020: 0, Career: 0

Versatile, forward potential

Yet to stamp his authority

## TIZZ SAYS...

I've enjoyed watching Kosi for a while. While he was hardly ever beaten as a defender at Box Hill, he never really troubled the statisticians either. Naturally, when he was made a forward during pre-season, I thought maybe he was having a last crack at trying to find a foothold in the AFL landscape. The Hawks don't usually tell you to go forward until you can get a possession in defence! But here we are. And here I am, stunned. Those six goals against the 'Roos out at Arden Street, while Nick cheered him on, was a watershed moment for Kosi, McRae might have worked wonders here, teaching him just how to utilise that physical frame of his to out-position opponents, and back his aggression to reach the ball. Completely out of the blue, Kosi looks every bit the focused, lead-up, physical, demanding-the-ball-while-punishing-the-opposition forward we've been searching for! That #34 guernsey I have in the cupboard at home just might be making a reappearance at games this year. Will he make a real impact at senior level? I'm excited to find out.



# #35 JOSH MORRIS

**DOB** 7-11-2001 **Height** 186 cm **Weight** 76 kg **Debut** 2020  
**Games** 2020: 4, Career: 4  
**Goals** 2020: 0, Career: 0

⊕ Crafty forward, swagger

⊖ Overall impact to date

## NICK SAYS...

As debut seasons go, Will Day set the bar fairly high. Both Morris and Maginess, taken in the same draft crop, were doomed to play catch-up. But what do I make for Morris' 2020 on its own merits? I certainly think he looks comfortable at the level, and we noted glimpses of his self-assurance off the field too. In the four senior games he played, though, it never really translated into any meaningful impact, beyond a brilliant first career goal. I think for the time being we should expect Morris to ply his trade at Box Hill, and continue to show promise in his forward craft. He's got the athleticism, he's a clean finisher, and has the makings of a quality forward target, and honestly, the club should be looking at who exactly takes over when Gunston and Breust eventually hang up the boots. I know - I hate it too, but they're not going to play forever. I suspect they had Jackson Ross in mind for such an apprenticeship, but found cause enough to go back to the drawing board. With a couple of goals in Box Hill's recent hit-out against Collingwood, Morris continues to show good signs. Here's hoping the club have their man this time around.

# #36 DYLAN MOORE

**DOB** 4-8-1999 **Height** 176 cm **Weight** 76 kg **Debut** 2019  
**Games** 2020: 3, Career: 10  
**Goals** 2020: 2, Career: 4

⊕ Round 23 showcase

⊖ Can't hold spot

## TIZZ SAYS...

Like Greaves, Moore was given the chance to shine late in 2020, and then he starred to take home a Brownlow vote from his last round performance. That's amazing for a bloke who was under the pressure of the door closing on his career. His 25-possession game displayed how he can win one-on-ones, set up his fellow forwards in good positions, and find the space to take a mark, then slow down the pace of the attack when required. More performances like that, and he successfully carves out a place in the 22. It's gonna require a huge effort, as his specific role is one the club have gone to the trade table to fill over the years. That means they're likely to back their own trade-targets before Moore. Maybe that changes with Wright leaving? Moore earned his one-year rookie contract, no question, but it's still do-or-die in 2021. Looking at his pre-season form, it's natural to have confidence in Moore, but it's holding down his spot that has been and will be the big test. A really intriguing season ahead for Moore, to say the least.



# #37 NED REEVES

**DOB** 31-10-1998 **Height** 208 cm **Weight** 96 kg **Debut** TBD + Supreme height  
**Games** 2020: 0, Career: 0  
**Goals** 2020: 0, Career: 0 --- Long-term project

## NICK SAYS...

Hawthorn has four ruckmen on its list, with three of them over 30 years old. So yeah, I have fingers and toes crossed that Ned Reeves' development is coming along nicely, because looking at the long-term future of the division, it seems to be him or bust. I trust the club will seek to address that in due course, but as it stands, yeah - not ideal. Of course, there's one other big reason I'm desperate for signs of Reeves' development, pun fully intended: he's bloody enormous. At some point I expect it will cease to amaze me, but I'm not there yet. Anyway, on size alone, Reeves already has a massive advantage over 99% of players on the field. It really comes down to how Hawthorn can effectively weaponise this, and develop a solid skillset to match. Of course, as with any ruckman, you've got to be patient, but we've witnessed some good progress this year from Reeves. Mitchell reserved plenty of praise for Reeves' performance in their practice hit-out, citing his aerial dominance and solid contributions at ground level. It's just one example of good things we're beginning to hear about Reeves. Please let it all amount to something!

# #38 DENVER GRAINGER-BARRAS

**DOB** 17-4-2002 **Height** 195 cm **Weight** 78 kg **Debut** TBD + Intercept game, athleticism  
**Games** 2020: N/A, Career: N/A  
**Goals** 2020: N/A, Career: N/A --- Endurance

## TIZZ SAYS...

So here's a not-so-fun fact: pick six could well be a "cursed pick". Just three players taken at pick six - James Walker, Steven Salopek and Kepler Bradley - have managed to reach 100 games. But who cares, right? It's superstitious nonsense! A crap stat! Sometimes stats are useless, and this is one of those times. In two years, DGB will be the first name written in each week. Before long, he'll be a key leader and defender for the next ten years. He has an uncanny ability to intercept mark, or disrupt his opponent, and will also run out of defence, scything through sides with his long, accurate kicking style. Swept up in the excitement, I think we all had DGB slated for an early debut, but that doesn't seem quite so likely when assessing the club's priorities, i.e. who's being picked where. Realistically, I think he debuts late in 2021, and I'll be watching his style evolve at VFL long before then. His immense talent is going to fuel a great rivalry with fellow sandgroper Logan McDonald (currently with the Swans) and I can't wait for that. My only question is - which number does he wear in 2022?



# #39 EMERSON JEKA

**DOB** 18-11-2001 **Height** 197 cm **Weight** 87 kg **Debut** TBD  
**Games** 2020: 0, Career: 0  
**Goals** 2020: 0, Career: 0

⊕ Contested marking  
⊖ Consistency

## NICK SAYS...

I imagine that Emerson Jeka, much like a few of the younger guys on our list, is relishing footy being back. His earliest interviews with the club indicated a burning desire for success, and so I suspect 2020 resembled a slightly frustrating half-initiation for him. Still, all that is behind him now, and Jeka has a great opportunity to finally strut his stuff. Praised as a towering, contested-marking swingman blessed with uncanny agility, Emerson Jeka is an exciting prospect. Presently, I kind of have him in a similar position as Josh Morris: a guy that, for the time being, will be plying his trade at Box Hill as the list evolves and changes around him. Right now, as far as senior opportunities go, he's deep in the queue. But that's exactly as it should be: he's 19 years old with plenty of development ahead of him. Make no mistake, though, looking at his traits, Hawthorn must him marked down as a key position player somewhere down the line. At 197cm, he boasts great athleticism, a strong aerial game, and can reel in contested marks. Sounds like a good blueprint to me.

# #40 SEAMUS MITCHELL

**DOB** 3-7-2002 **Height** 181 cm **Weight** 74 kg **Debut** TBD  
**Games** 2020: N/A, Career: N/A  
**Goals** 2020: N/A, Career: N/A

⊕ Speed, athleticism, creativity  
⊖ Defensive pressure

## TIZZ SAYS...

We do love an S.Mitchell at Hawthorn. Pretty big shoes to fill, of course - no pressure! Prior to the season-that-wasn't - COVID disrupting everything - Seamus was earmarked to play through the midfield, having played at half-forward for the Bendigo Pioneers in 2019. Hawthorn selected him on his talent, and the observed footballing smarts of an under-ager who performed very well in the NAB-league series, without any real idea of just how good Seamus can be. Being taken much earlier than expected by the draft experts speaks to the Hawks rating his rare mix of creativity and speed (of both mind and body). And going off what we've read to date, Seamus also possesses great agility and a good vertical leap, as well as a desire to take the game on. All these things considered, I expect he'll be exciting to watch at VFL level, where I hope he can add consistency to his season. Frankly, the upside for Seamus Mitchell is enormous.



# #41 CONNOR DOWNIE

**DOB** 31-5-2002 **Height** 185 cm **Weight** 82 kg **Debut** TBD     + Outside game, run-and-carry  
**Games** 2020: N/A, Career: N/A  
**Goals** 2020: N/A, Career: N/A     --- Inside/midfield craft

## NICK SAYS...

Naturally, once Hawthorn's 2020 campaign looked all but over, attention turned to the draft, and fans became fixated one one particular player: Connor Downie. As far as Hawthorn fans were concerned, it was critical that the club honour its investment in the NGA, and recruit Connor Downie. Then Ricky Henderson retired, and a certain three-time premiership wingman defected. Not even the signing of Tom Phillips could quell the masses. "Get Connor Downie!" When his name was read out, and it was confirmed he'd be in brown and gold, there was a sense of relief among supporters. That relief has since transformed into palpable excitement, with glimpses of Downie in the practice and pre-season matches igniting hype all over again. His outside game, run-and-carry, and kick penetration have all been on display, and he has the makings of a damaging wingman. Basically, the sort of thing we've seen in highlights is exactly what Downie is bringing to the table, which is enormously satisfying. Downie is a Round One debutant for mine, and might be in for an even bigger season than even the most vocal Downie stans expected. I can't wait to see him charging across the wings of the MCG.

# #42 TYLER BROCKMAN

**DOB** 22-11-2002 **Height** 181 cm **Weight** 75 kg **Debut** TBD     + X-factor, explosiveness  
**Games** 2020: N/A, Career: N/A  
**Goals** 2020: N/A, Career: N/A     --- Consistency

## TIZZ SAYS...

There's no better attack than defence! So, Puopolo exits, and Brockman arrives. Could it really be that simple? When Poppy came to the club, who could ever have expected that he'd reach those heights? Well, Tyler Brockman has the talent to go stratospheric. With a sizeable bag of tricks, a level of showmanship (soon to be stymied you'd reckon) and an obsessive aggression for defenders trying to clear the danger, we can start to get excited about the future of our forward line. Unlike Nick, I'm not sure he'll be selected for Round One, in spite of his impressive pre-season form, but I fully expect him to announce his arrival at the 'G before the end of the year. Here's something that might stir some schadenfreude in a few Hawthorn supporters: the Eagles are said to be spewing they missed out on his talent, having watched him for years at the Colts and the U-18 sides. Surely that's a good sign? Anyway, DGB and Brockman are two major talents from WA to reach Hawthorn now, and they could be our most important draftees for many years.



# #43 JACK SAUNDERS

**DOB** 11-2-2002 **Height** 177 cm **Weight** 73 kg **Debut** TBD  
**Games** 2020: N/A, Career: N/A  
**Goals** 2020: N/A, Career: N/A

⊕ Inside mid w/ strength, class  
--- Light frame, disposal

## NICK SAYS...

Talk about a pocket rocket! There's something Poppy-esque about Jack Saunders. Taken at pick four in the rookie draft, Saunders is a quality inside-mid, boasting a good combination of strength and class, not to mention line-breaking speed and a knack around goals. Pleasingly, he's said himself that he loves a bit of physicality, which is a trait always appreciated in a player - especially here, given Saunders' light frame! Looking at his most recent stats, Saunders averaged 24.8 disposals, 5.3 marks, and 6.6 tackles. I struggled to find too much info online about him, but there is a highlight reel of a BOG game he played for Norwood, where he basically dominated, finding plenty of the footy and finishing with five goals. If you get a moment, it's well-worth a look. His speed is particularly impressive. Recovering from a hamstring injury, a large portion of Saunders' time at the club to date has been about managing his rehab, but he was able to play in Box Hill's hit out against the Pies. He's one guy I really look forward to watching this year, to see if he might bring a different dimension to our midfield.



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# NICK'S BEST 22

ROUND 1, 2021



# TIZZ'S BEST 22

ROUND 1, 2021



# OPPOSITION WATCH

aka. A BRIEF LOOK AT HAWTHORN'S RIVALS AND THEIR CHANCES

## ADELAIDE

Tizz: Everyone is on sale at Next to Nicks Academy.

Nick: Things finally began to click for the Crows at the end of 2021, but they're still very much a club engaged in a rebuild. Bottom four.

## BRISBANE

Tizz: Fagan is sure to pick-pocket a premiership soon.

Nick: My tip for the flag. It's an outcome I'd be fairly comfortable with.

## CARLTON

Tizz: Blues fans bagging their own side even when they make finals? Lock it in.

Nick: They'll be contenders, but it's not quite their time just yet. Finals bound, at least.

## COLLINGWOOD

Tizz: There's nothing more black and white than the plumes of grey smoke rising from this dumpster-fire.

Nick: They've found their Mr Wright, but it'll go so very wrong for the Pies this year.

## ESSENDON

Tizz: Need to cheat again fairly soon, they're getting boring. Losing, their brand.

Nick: Add another calendar year to the 'Days Since Essendon Won A Final' count.

## FREMANTLE

Tizz: Longmuir will be given long time to rediscover the recipe of the original Violet Crumble we knew and loved.

Nick: I can't think of a club I care about less this season. Total "no man's land" team.

## GEELONG

Tizz: When cats fall from large buildings they relax as they reach terminal velocity, and they do look relaxed at Geelong.

Nick: I'd say they're trying to cling onto past glories like Hawthorn, but what glories? It's a long season for old men. Could see the return of ol' 'Straight Sets' Scotty.

## GOLD COAST

Tizz: Dew to climb the ladder and will scare the competition into abandoning their draft concessions. So I implore them to begin a better long-term strategy than winning against Hawthorn.

Nick: Should be really enjoyable to watch as they come along in leaps and bounds.

## GWS

Tizz: The gloves are off - no Camerons at GWS by 2022.

Nick: That sound? It's the premiership window closing shut. The Giants will slide.

# OPPOSITION WATCH

aka. A BRIEF LOOK AT HAWTHORN'S RIVALS AND THEIR CHANCES

## MELBOURNE

Tizz: Finals bound, and hog-tied on arrival.

Nick: At most, they'll make finals, but even then they'll be a total non-threat.

The stench of mediocrity is so strong that I can't imagine success for Melbourne.

## NORTH MELBOURNE

Tizz: A great Robin Hood story - they're now robbing their own attack to defend.

Weakened until they agree to go to Tassie.

Nick: The prospect of North claiming the wooden spoon gives me a shinboner\*.

## PORT POWER

Tizz: Hinkley somehow galvanised the group - incredible effort really, I don't see it holding together under expectations.

Nick: I won't repeat the mistake I made last year and underestimate them. Less than a Grand Final berth will be a failure. Harsh? They set the bar themselves last year.

## RICHMOND

Tizz: Can't wait for the headline "Tiger Time Runs Out".

Nick: They'll be thereabouts again. If they make the Grand Final, I fully anticipate Dusty getting absolutely annihilated by a Yeates-style hitjob.

## ST.KILDA

Tizz: Ratten continues to impress. The Saints are my second choice for the cup.

Nick: The team that will make the most exciting charge up the ladder in 2021.

## SYDNEY

Tizz: Swanning around like they own the league, but in shocking financial position.  
They should sell McDonald to us and keep Buddy for 1000.

Nick: They've got some quality kids running around, but Sydney are very much still at the beginning of a new chapter. I hope we see Buddy this year at least.

## WEST COAST

Tizz: Just a re-run of disliked characters. Don't drop it, Darling!

Nick: Perhaps the definition of 'middle of the road'.

Many below them, but many other teams superior.

## WESTERN BULLDOGS

Tizz: They've got the talent, the structure,  
the umpire and no bite.

Nick: Mifielders, assemble! They have to make  
the semi finals at least, and probably will.



\* Sorry.

# Fixture

Essendon	Marvel Stadium	Sat, 20 March (7:25 pm)
<b>Richmond</b>	<b>MCG</b>	<b>Sun, 28 March (1:10 pm)</b>
Geelong	MCG	Mon, April 5 (3:20 pm)
Fremantle	Optus Stadium	Sun, 11 April (2:40 pm)
<b>Melbourne</b>	<b>MCG</b>	<b>Sun, 18 April (3:20 pm)</b>
<b>Adelaide</b>	<b>UTAS</b>	<b>Sun, 25 April (12:30 pm)</b>
St Kilda	Marvel Stadium	TBD
West Coast	MCG	TBD
<b>North Melb.</b>	<b>UTAS</b>	<b>TBD</b>
<b>Carlton</b>	<b>MCG</b>	<b>TBD</b>
Gold Coast	TIO Stadium	TBD
-Bye-		
Sydney	SCG	TBD
<b>Essendon</b>	<b>MCG</b>	<b>TBD</b>
GWS	GIANTS Stadium	TBD
<b>Port Adelaide</b>	<b>Marvel Stadium</b>	<b>TBD</b>
<b>Fremantle</b>	<b>UTAS</b>	<b>TBD</b>
Melbourne	MCG	TBD
<b>Brisbane</b>	<b>MCG</b>	<b>TBD</b>
Adelaide	Adelaide Oval	TBD
<b>Collingwood</b>	<b>MCG</b>	<b>TBD</b>
<b>W.Bulldogs</b>	<b>UTAS</b>	<b>TBD</b>
Richmond	MCG	TBD



# Acknowledgments

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Nick: As always, I'd like to thank my Dad, a big supporter of the show, and without whom I would not be a proud, passionate and paid up Hawthorn supporter (or exist). Thanks also to my brother, and to the familiar faces in M10. You helped me discover the thing I love about footy: community. You inspired this podcast.

Tizz: To my Dad for his booming encouragements from the sidelines. For my sister, for lining up with me at 1am each Grand Final day. And to my Mum, who shocked me with her fandom in '08! Finally, that guernsey, #24 - love ya work!

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**See you at the footy! Go Hawks!**

**- Nick & Tizz**